

California Department of  
Water Resources' Mission...

*To manage the water of California, in cooperation  
with other agencies, to benefit the state's people and  
protect, restore and enhance the natural and  
human environments.*

# Safety Along The State Water Project



## The State Water Project

Planned, constructed and operated by the California Department of Water Resources, the State Water Project is the largest state-built, multipurpose water project in the United States. The Project includes 29 storage facilities, 18 pumping plants, four pumping-generating plants, five hydroelectric power plants, and approximately 660 miles of canals and pipelines. Its main purpose is water supply — that is, to divert and store surplus water during wet periods and distribute it to areas of need in Northern California, the San Francisco Bay area, the San Joaquin Valley, the Central Coast, and Southern California. Other project purposes include flood control, power generation, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement,

and water quality improvement in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Twenty-nine water contractors, the urban and agricultural water agencies that buy water from the State Water Project, have long-term contracts for an ultimate total of just over four million acre-feet a year. Of this amount, approximately 70 percent of this SWP water will go to urban users and 30 percent to agricultural users.

## Recreation on The State Water Project

From Antelope Lake in Northern California to Lake Perris in Southern California, the State Water Project offers a variety of recreational activities. At various Project reservoirs, you can swim, fish, boat, water ski, picnic and camp. Along the 400 miles of open canals, you can fish from 16 specially designated fishing access sites, each with parking facilities and some with toilets.

You can ensure your enjoyment of these activities by taking certain necessary precautions. This brochure offers some simple tips for your safety along the State Water Project.

## Information

For more complete information about the State Water Project, call the Department of Water Resources Office of Water Education at (916) 653-6192 or 1-800-272-8869.

Visit DWR's Website at  
<http://www.dwr.water.ca.gov/>

The hearing-impaired can call the California  
Relay Service (voice) at 1-800-735-2922.

**If you need this publication in an alternate  
form, contact the Office of Water Education  
at 1-800-272-8869.**



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## Aqueduct Precautions

Although they are the most effective way to move water, open-canal aqueducts can be very hazardous — especially to those unaware of their special dangers.

## Watch for Strong Currents

The calm surface of aqueduct waters is very deceptive. Still waters can, without warning, start flowing rapidly — creating turbulence and strong currents. Inverted siphons (pipelines, often several feet long, used to carry water under roadways, streams and railroad crossings) create suction currents that are not visible from the surface.

In some places along the aqueduct, the water is as deep as 30 feet.



California Aqueduct

## Beware of Slippery Concrete Sides

The concrete sides of the canals are steep and slippery with algae, sand or gravel - making it nearly impossible to climb out without help.

## Locate Float Lines and Safety Ladders

If you should accidentally fall into the canal, take hold of the nearest float line. These lines are



Float lines

strung through large round red, orange, or white styrofoam balls visible just above the water. Float lines are placed upstream of check structures (gates regulating the flow of water in the canals), downstream of bridges, and at the design-

nated fishing access sites.

Safety ladders are located at the ends of the float lines and along the canal 500 feet apart on alternate sides of the aqueduct, and are marked by a yellow background painted on the concrete behind the ladder.



Safety ladder

## Avoid Aqueduct Dangers

Don't let children or pets play near canals. Don't swim or boat in the aqueduct - both activities are dangerous and illegal. Don't climb fences or trespass in posted areas; they're there for your safety. Don't use firearms or build fires along the aqueduct.

## Important Safety Tips

To enjoy your stay along the State Water Project - whether at a reservoir or along the aqueduct - follow these important safety tips.

## When Fishing...

**Fish with a buddy, never alone.** Your buddy can help if you're in trouble.

**Locate safety ladders** along the sides of the aqueduct and fish upstream of one.

**Keep off road bridges** which cross over the aqueduct. They are for vehicles and are not safe fishing sites.



Fish with a buddy

**Stay away from the sloping aqueduct sides.** Sand and gravel on the concrete sides make them very slippery.

**Don't retrieve equipment dropped** into the water. You will lose your equipment but save your life.

**Wear rubber-soled shoes** to prevent slipping into the aqueduct.

**Heed all hazard signs.** They alert you to dangers.

**Watch out for poisonous snakes.**

## When Boating...

**Always stay away from spillways, intake and outlet structures.** They are usually marked off by long booms or float lines because of strong

currents. Also, beware - large rocks on the face of dams are dangerous.

**Watch out for rocks, logs and islands.** Water levels can vary several feet in one day during times of water intake or release.

**Maintain a constant lookout and travel at reduced speeds.** Following winter storms and during spring runoff, debris is washed into the reservoirs.

**Watch for ice cold water.** Sudden immersion in such water can cause temporary paralysis resulting in helplessness and possible drowning.

**Check how far launching ramps extend into the water.** Changing water levels can determine whether ramps will be usable or not.

**Wear Coast Guard approved life jackets.**

Keep one on children under 12 at all times.

**Observe all Coast Guard regulations.**



Wear a life jacket

## And Remember, Alcohol And Safety Don't Mix...

Statistics show that drinking alcoholic beverages plays a major role in the accidents and deaths that occur on public recreational areas. Never drink and drive a boat or car. Keep safety in mind for you and others using State Water Project facilities.